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ABSTRACT

During 1970-71 partial or full semester systems were in operation at different secondary schools. Principals, teachers, students, and parents from schools in each of three categories: partial semester plan, full semester plan with a static timetable schedule, and full semester plan with a rotating timetable schedule, were sent separate questionnaires which elicited their attitudes toward the various systems. The questionnaires, their results (a majority of which were favorable), and list of advantages and disadvantages of semestering are included. (AG)

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RESEARCH REPORT

An Evaluation of Semestering in Vancouver Secondary Schools during the 1970-71 School Year

July, 1971
Allan G. Moodie
Research Report 71-19

TM 000 952

Department of Planning and Evaluation
Board of School Trustees
1595 West 10th Avenue
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AN EVALUATION OF SEMESTERING IN VANCOUVER SECONDARY SCHOOLS DURING THE 1970-1971 SCHOOL YEAR

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Abstract

One of the most significant trends in secondary school organization is the semester system in which the regular ten-month school year is divided into two five-month terms or semesters.

To evaluate the effectiveness of semestering in Vancouver secondary schools, four types of questionnaires were developed and distributed to:

(1) principals of six arbitrarily selected schools where a partial or full semester plan was in operation during the 1970-71 school year,

(2) teachers who taught semestered courses at these six schools,

(3) a 10% sampling of students from four schools which had a full semester plan with a rotating or static timetable schedule, and

(4) parents whose children participated in the research survey.

The majority of principals, teachers, parents and students supported the various semester plans instituted in Vancouver schools. Although there was a very wide range of comments made about semestering by the respondents, the major advantages cited were:

(1) Students can graduate early.

(2) A greater variety of courses can be offered to broaden and enrich knowledge.

(3) Retention of material is easier when a subject is studied each school day.

(4) Failed courses can be repeated next semester.

(5) A change of subjects and classes in the middle of the school year maintains interest.

The major disadvantages listed were:

(1) Pace of instruction and learning is too rapid in semestered courses.

(2) Some courses have too much content for one semester.

(3) Semestering has increased the workload of administrators, counsellors and teachers.

(4) In semestering there is a lack of continuity when seven months elapse before another sequential course is studied in the same academic area.

(5) Semestering creates discrepancies in opportunities for students preparing for scholarship exams.

AN EVALUATION OF SEMESTERING IN VANCOUVER SECONDARY SCHOOLS DURING THE 1970-1971 SCHOOL YEAR

Introduction

One of the most significant trends in secondary school organization is the semester system in which the regular ten-month school year is divided into two five-month terms or semesters. Students' yearly work load of seven or eight courses is distributed between the two semesters. One half of the year's work is taken in one semester and the remainder in the other semester. In Vancouver each semestered course usually retains the same content as it had in the ten-month program. The semestered approach thus provides both an increased frequency and concentration in instruction that is designed to contribute to more effective learning.

During 1970-71 partial or fully semestered plans in varying organizational patterns were in operation at the following Vancouver secondary schools:

(a) Partial semester plan - Byng, Killarney and Point Grey Secondary Schools

(b) Full semester plan with a static timetable schedule - Magee, Templeton and Thompson Secondary Schools

(c) Full semester plan with a rotating timetable schedule - Hamber, Kitsilano and Prince of Wales Secondary Schools

Research Sample

Two of the three schools from each of the above categories were arbitrarily selected to form the research sample and were assigned the following lettered designations:

(a) Partial semester plan - Schools "U" and "V"

(b) Full semester plan with a static timetable schedule - Schools "W" and "X"

(c) Full semester plan with a rotating timetable schedule - Schools "Y" and "Z"

Research Procedures

A committee of representatives whose schools had a semester plan in operation assisted the Planning and Evaluation Department in designing questionnaires for principals, teachers, students and parents. Copies of the questionnaires appear in the Appendices.

A questionnaire on semestering was given to principals of the six schools and their responses and comments appear in Appendix A. It should be noted that principals had the option of omitting any item in the questionnaire which they felt was not relevant to their school programs.

Teachers who taught semestered courses in the six selected schools were also given questionnaires. Questionnaire responses from teachers are noted in Appendix B.

In the four schools "W", "X", "Y" and "Z" which had a full semestered plan, questionnaires were distributed to a 10% sampling of students. Summarized reponses from the students' questionnaires appear in Appendix C. Students in schools "U" and "V" with a partial semester plan did not participate in the questionnaire survey.

Parents of students who comprised the research sample were also requested to complete a questionnaire on semestering. Responses to the parents' questionnaires are summarized in Appendix D.

Findings of the Study

The questionnaire responses and comments from principals, teachers, students and parents appear in Appendices A, B, C and D, respectively. For multiple-choice questions the percentage of response is listed after each alternate response. Variations in the total percentage of responses for each question were caused by some respondents omitting the question or by the rounding off of percentages to the nearest whole number.

As teachers, students and parents provided a wide range of comments to the open-ended questions, sample comments have been selected to indicate the representativeness of their responses. An analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that two major trends often existed among the responses to the multiple-choice questions. Whenever two major response trends existed for a question, the trend with the higher frequency was reported first in the following summarized comments.

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (see Appendix A)

The majority of principals stated that in a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program):

- Their schools have utilized more community resources. (Question 1)
- Semestering has helped or made no difference to the beneficial use of school time by students. (Question 2)
- School facilities have been utilized more. (Question 3)
- Students are permitted to audit courses. (Question 4)
- More courses are offered to students. (Question 7)
- Class size is the same or larger. (Question 9)
- Frequency of course failure is the same. (Question 12)
- Administrative and secretarial workload is greater. (Questions 16 and 17)
- The workload of counsellors and teachers is greater. (Questions 18 and 19)

SUMMARY OF TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (see Appendix B)

The majority of teachers stated that in a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program):

- A greater amount of time is required for lesson preparation. (Question 8)
- The marking load is greater. (Question 9)
- Field trips, extra-curricular activities and other causes of student absence from scheduled classes have had no effect or a negative influence upon teaching. (Question 10)
- Students' efforts in school work are greater or the same. (Question 11)
- Learning of performance skills by students has been helped or is the same. (Question 12)
- Mastery of content has been helped or is the same. (Question 13)
- Students' understanding of their courses is the same or has been helped. (Question 14)
- Less opportunity is available for enriching students' programs. ("More" opportunity elicited the second largest response.) (Question 15)
- Teachers believe their pace of instruction is better and more intensive. (Questions 16 and 17)
- Teachers have modified their teaching methods. (Question 18)
- Teachers stated their teaching was either "more effective in some areas and less effective in others" or "more effective." (Question 19)
- Work and study habits of students are better or the same. (Question 20)
- Teachers stated it was either "an advantage" or "neither an advantage nor disadvantage" in meeting a new group of students half-way through the school year. (Question 21)
- Teachers know their students about the same or not as well. (Question 22)
- More or the same amount of emotional strain is placed upon students. (Question 23)
- More emotional strain is placed upon teachers. (The same amount is the second largest category.) (Question 24)

- Teachers give the same amount of individual assistance to pupils. (Question 25)

- Regular attendance of students is more important. (Question 26)

- With the exception of one school, semestering has had no effect upon teacher sponsorship of extra-curricular activities. (The second largest response in varying degrees among schools is "hindered".) (Question 27)

- Semestering has had no effect upon student participation in extra-curricular activities. (Question 28)

- The amount of unassigned time in both first and second semesters varies generally from 0 to 20%. The median category is 11 to 15%. (Questions 29 and 30)

- Unassigned time is generally used for lesson planning and preparation. (Question 31)

- Fewer than half of the students could benefit from unassigned time. (Question 32)

- Teachers prefer the present length of class periods but also like flexible-time periods (i.e. modules). (Question 33)

- Teachers prefer the semester system. (Question 34)

SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (see Appendix C)

The majority of students stated that in a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program):

- Their workload is greater or the same. (Question 4)

- Their effort in class is greater or the same. (Question 5)

- Their school work at home is greater or the same. (Question 6)

- The same amount or more school work is done in school outside of class. (Question 7)

- Generally it is easier to learn in a semester system. (Questions 8 - 18)

- It is easier to learn performance skills such as in Typing, Woodwork, Sewing, etc. (Question 19)

- Classroom teaching is more concentrated. (Question 20)

- Teaching methods have improved or remained the same. (Question 21)

- There is probably sufficient time to complete the courses. (Question 22)
- Courses are more interesting or the same. (Question 23)
- Work and study habits are better or the same. (Question 24)
- They have more or approximately the same success in school. (Question 25)
- They like meeting new groups of students and teachers in the second semester. (Questions 26 and 27)
- They know their peers about the same or better. (Question 28)
- They know their teachers about the same or better. (In one school "not as well" was the second largest response after "the same".) (Question 29)
- Teachers provide the same or less individual assistance. (In one school "more" was the second largest response after "the same".) (Question 30)
- Regular attendance is more important. (Question 31)
- They either participate in one or two extra-curricular activities or do not participate in any activities. (Question 32)
- Semestering has no effect or makes more difficult student participation in extra-curricular activities. (Question 33)
- They do not plan to graduate early. (Question 34)
- They plan to enrich their school programs. (Question 35)
- The majority of students prefer the semester system. (Question 36)

SUMMARY OF PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES (see Appendix D)

The majority of parents stated that in a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program):

- Their children are either doing about the same amount of homework or doing more homework. (Question 1)
- Their children have about the same success or better success in school. (Question 2)
- Regular attendance is more important. (Question 3)
- Their children prefer the semester plan. (Question 4)
- They (parents) favour the semester plan. (Question 5)
- Additional courses in the semester system are considered beneficial for their children. (Question 6)

Conclusions

The majority of principals, teachers, parents and students appeared to support the various semester plans instituted in Vancouver schools. Although there was a very wide range of comments made about semestering by the respondents, the major advantages cited were:

(1) Students can graduate early.

(2) A greater variety of courses can be offered to broaden and enrich knowledge.

(3) Retention of material is easier when a subject is studied each school day.

(4) Failed courses can be repeated next semester.

(5) A change of subjects and classes in the middle of the school year maintains interest.

The major disadvantages listed were:

(1) Pace of instruction and learning is too rapid in semestered courses.

(2) Some courses have too much content for one semester.

(3) Semestering has increased the workload of administrators, counsellors and teachers.

(4) In semestering there is a lack of continuity when seven months elapse before another sequential course is studied in the same academic area.

(5) Semestering creates discrepancies in opportunities for students preparing for scholarship exams.

Limitations of the Study

In this study no comparisons were made between the different types of semester plans as the major trends in multiple-choice questionnaire responses were very similar for all schools in the study. The range of comments to the open-ended questions was too wide to include them in this study, and, therefore, they were condensed to a few major positive and negative comments.

The writer has noted that while the responses of teachers to the structured questions have supported the semester system, at least one-half of their supplementary comments have been critical of the scheme. This apparent ambivalence raises questions about the validity of the questionnaire data and hence constitutes a significant limitation of the study.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE PRINCIPAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE ON SEMESTERING

From Six Schools: U, V, W, X, Y and Z

Directions: Please indicate your response to each question that has alternate choices by placing a check mark (✓) after the statement which corresponds to your opinion. For the remainder of the questions please complete the requested documentation.
Supplementary comments are welcomed.

1. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what use has been made of community resources, i.e., outside speakers, field trips and community agencies?

   (A) Greater 4
   (B) Less ____
   (C) No difference 2
   (D) No opinion ____

2. What effect does semestering have upon the beneficial use of school time by students?

   (A) Helped 2
   (B) Hindered ____
   (C) No difference 2
   (D) No opinion ____

   Please comment

   "The aim of the partial semester system is to blend alternatives and time demands into maximum use of teacher talents and facilities."

   "Allows a student to complete more than one program."

3. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) to what extent have school facilities been utilized?

   (A) Greater 5
   (B) Lesser ____
   (C) No difference ____
   (D) No opinion ____

   Please comment

   "Specialty areas (i.e. H.E., I.E., Music, Library) are used more extensively and satisfactorily."

4. Are students permitted to audit courses in your school?

   (A) Yes 3
   (B) No 1

5. If your answer to the preceding question is "yes", why do students audit courses?

"Some students who failed during the first semester are auditing courses for writing exams in June."

"Auditing courses for enrichment."

6. Please list the total number of students who are auditing courses in the following subject areas:

Subject Areas	Number of Auditing Students Schools: W	Z	
Art, Music, Drama	4		students
Commerce	4		students
English	6	8	students
Mathematics	4		students
Modern Languages	1		students
Home Economics			students
Physical Education	6		students
Science	12		students
Industrial Education			students
Social Studies	4		students
Guidance			students
Others (specify subject)			students

7. How extensive is the offering of courses at your school in a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program)?

(A) Greater 6 "Generally caused by changes in educational planning
(B) Less _____ rather than by semester systems."
(C) No difference _____
(D) No opinion _____

8. Please provide documentation of the impact of semestering on attendance:
See Table I on the next page.

(a) Average Daily Attendance (as a percent) for each grade for October, 1968*, 1969 and 1970.

	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
October, 1968	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
October, 1969	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
October, 1970	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %

(b) Comparison of Annual Average Attendance for appropriate years, if available.
(c) Documentation of period attendance.
(d) Other documentation of attendance.

TABLE I: AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE OF SCHOOLS WITH SEMESTER PLANS

		Grade				Average School Attendance
		9	10	11	12	
October, 1968	Average	91.5%	91.1%	91.4%	91.4%	91.4%
October, 1969	Average	94.4%	92.4%	91.3%	90.8%	92.2%
	School W	95.2	92.6	92.8	92.8	93.4
	School X	96	94	91	92	93.3
	School Y	95.3	93.3	91.7	89.3	92.4
	School Z	91.0	89.6	89.7	89.0	89.8
October, 1970	Average	94.1%	93.4%	90.9%	89.3%	92.0%
	School W	93.6	94.0	90.1	90.6	92.1
	School X	95	95	93	90	93.3
	School Y	94.2	93.2	89.2	87.2	91.0
	School Z	93.5	91.4	91.4	89.2	91.4

9. How does class size in a semester system compare with that in the usual yearly program?

(A) Greater 2
(B) Less
(C) No difference 3
(D) No opinion

Please comment

"Academic classes contain more students as other areas (I.E. & H.E.) can take only limited enrollment and because the number of teaching staff is fixed."

"Balance is more difficult because there is a variety of courses but teachers still are assigned 6/7 blocks to teach as on a regular 7 x 5 timetable."

"One block of non-classroom time per teacher per day as compared to the former five-sevenths of a block daily."

10. What is the impact of semestering on staffing?

"Course loads for the second semester are difficult to predict in summer planning. In some cases transfer of staff at the end of the first semester may be necessary."

"More complex to balance loads but the staff are more prepared to have assignments varied if they consist of courses they want to teach."

11. (a) In the following programs how many students of these ages have graduated at the end of the first semester in January, 1971? (Age at January 31, 1971)

For Schools W, X, Y and Z

Programs	16 yrs.	17 yrs.	18 yrs.	19 yrs. and over
Academic-Technical		14	12	5
Commercial	1	5	5	6
Industrial	1	1	1	3
Community Services			2	
Visual and Performing Arts			2	
Trade Preparation			1	
Pre-Employment				
How many were accelerated through Grades 9-12?	2	17	20	1

(b) In the following programs, how many students of these ages graduated in January, 1970? (Age at January 31, 1970.)

For School W

Programs	16 yrs.	17 yrs.	18 yrs.	19 yrs. and over
Academic-Technical		3	2	1
Commercial		3	1	
Industrial				2
Community Services				
Visual and Performing Arts				
Trade Preparation				
Pre-Employment				
How many were accelerated through Grades 9-12?		6	1	

12. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what is the frequency of course failure among students?

(A) Greater 1
(B) Less
(C) No difference 3
(D) No opinion 1

Please Comment:
"I hope there is less frequency of failure but it is not due to the semester system."

13. Of the students who failed courses in the first semester, what percentage are repeating the same course in the second semester for the following subject areas? (Calculated by the following method)

$$\frac{\text{Number of students who are repeating courses in the second semester}}{\text{Number of students who failed the course in the first semester}} \times 100\%$$

Subject Areas	Percentage				
Schools:	V	W	Y	Z	
Art, Music, Drama		1	7		%
Commerce		59	12	34	%
English		78	72	30	%
Mathematics	25	82	54	56	%
Modern Languages	20	44	61	41	%
Home Economics		17	13	20	%
Physical Education		66	84		%
Science		79	56	20	%
Industrial Education		50	13	74	%
Social Studies		78	53	42	%
Others (specify subject)					%

14. How many students are enrolled on a part-time basis in your school?

Schools: V W X Y Z
0 24 15 9 9 students (This represents 0.5 to 0.75 4 % of the total enrollment.)

15. How many students presently in attendance at your school had previously withdrawn from a school? 311 students (This represents 1 - 7 % of the total enrollment.)

Schools: V W X Y Z
8 70 63122 48 students

16. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what has been your administrative workload?

(A) Greater 5
(B) Less
(C) No difference
(D) No opinion

Please comment

"More administrative decisions required (i.e. balancing teacher loads, more complexity in program offerings and more information to be disseminated)."

17. What has been the impact of semestering on the secretarial workload?

(A) Greater 4
(B) Less
(C) No difference 1
(D) No opinion

Please comment

"Entering marks is more complex."

"More directives and notices required, two registrations."

"Dropping of cross-grade examinations, departmental examinations has eased load."

18. What has been the impact of semestering on the counselling workload?

(A) Greater 5
(B) Less
(C) No difference
(D) No opinion

Please comment

"More complex because of wider choices and provision of alternative ways of selecting courses to complete programs."

"Pre-timetabling students who have not completed all courses on the first semester, and timetabling students for the first time for the second semester."

19. What has been the impact of semestering on the teacher's workload?

(A) Greater 4
(B) Less
(C) No difference 1
(D) No opinion

Please comment

"Teachers meet fewer students each semester but may teach more students over two semesters than they taught on a yearly program."

"Daily timetable means more intensive instruction and marking of assignments."

20. What has been the impact of semestering on school morale?

"Increased interest in course variety."

"Course alternatives provide a means for avoiding restrictive situations."

"A minority of students are not capable of working under pressure."

21. What has been the impact of semestering on teaching methods?

"Most staff members have re-examined methodology and have developed a variety of teaching styles."

"More efficient treatment of semestered subjects."

22. How many students who were not in school last semester have re-enrolled in February, 1971?

Schools:	W -	23 students
	X -	27
	Y -	101
	Z -	15
Total	=	166 students

23. What effect does semestering have on the proportion of time that teachers spend in "non-teaching" activities?

"Proportion of non-teaching activities is greater 14-20%."

"Teachers are spending as much time on extra-curricular activities with the exception of those that occur during the evening hours. This is due to increased marking pressure."

24. What effect does semestering have on the proportion of time that teachers spend working with individual students?

"More time is available to make appointments and help students in non-teaching periods."

25. What effect does semestering have upon the teacher's preparation of lessons?

"Preparation load is increased for the first semester. However, it may decrease during the second semester if the same subjects are taught."

"More difficult to obtain outside assistance from agencies other than those associated with education."

26. What is the effect of semestering on the level of achievement by students?

"Skills and achievement have improved."

"Course options may have provided more palatable choices for students."

"Achievement is the same."

"Too early to determine if the level of achievement has changed."

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APPENDIX B

No. of Questionnaires Returned - Schools: U = 39 X = 61
V = 31 Y = 70
W = 78 Z = 56

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE
TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRES ON STREAMING

Instructions: Please respond to the following questions by marking between the dotted parallel lines under the appropriate letter on the answer sheet. The response to the questionnaire is intended to be anonymous and you need not sign your name.
Important: Please use a medium (HB) pencil to shade between the dotted parallel lines under the appropriate letters on the answer sheet.

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1. Your teaching certification is:	%	%	%	%	%	%
(A) 4B, Category 2 or lower	0	0	4	1	1	2
(B) 4A or Category 3	0	0	1	0	1	2
(C) 5C or Category 4	3	7	4	6	6	14
(D) 5B or Category 5	82	68	65	59	52	41
(E) 5A, Category 6 or higher	15	26	26	33	39	41
2. Your teaching experience at the secondary school level is:						
(A) Less than 1 year	3	0	4	10	4	5
(B) 1 - 2 years	10	16	10	10	7	5
(C) 3 - 5 years	33	32	17	20	21	14
(D) 6 - 9 years	13	13	19	19	19	13
(E) more than 9 years	31	39	50	38	47	55
3/4/5. Your principal teaching area is: (Select only one response)						
3(A) Art	8	0	3	4	6	4
3(B) Commerce	8	7	9	9	6	5
3(C) English	15	13	12	10	10	14
3(D) Mathematics	3	10	15	11	10	9
3(E) Modern Languages	13	13	8	9	9	7
4(A) Home Economics	5	10	12	10	7	11
4(B) Physical Education	10	0	3	9	9	7
4(C) Science	13	13	13	9	11	13
4(D) Industrial Education	5	16	9	11	10	13
4(E) Social Studies	15	16	10	10	10	7
5(A) Guidance	3	3	10	7	3	9
5(B) Music	3	3	5	1	3	4
5(C) Drama	3	3	1	5	3	2
5(D) Library	0	0	3	3	4	2
5(E) Others	3	3	4	5	3	7
6. Most of your pupils are registered in grade: (Select only one response)						
(A) 8	10	29	26	24	19	16
(B) 9	21	23	22	21	16	12
(C) 10	15	23	19	19	23	16
(D) 11	28	23	13	17	24	23
(E) 12	23	3	15	17	14	23
7. Most of your pupils are on the program called:						
(A) Academic	80	87	47	64	81	77
(B) Non-Academic	21	13	37	27	14	16
(C) Pre-Employment or Special Education	0	0	8	4	0	5

8. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what has been the amount of time required for lesson preparation? (If you have not taught in a secondary school with a yearly program, you may assess the semester system in terms of previous educational experience.)

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%	%	%
	51	58	59	59	61	64
(A) Greater	5	7	4	4	3	2
(B) Less	36	36	32	32	30	25
(C) The same	5	0	5	3	3	5
(D) No opinion						

9. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what has been your marking load?

(A) Greater	51	65	69	58	67	63
(B) Less	0	0	3	1	0	12
(C) The same	44	32	21	30	27	16
(D) No opinion	3	0	6	7	3	9

10. How have field trips, extra-curricular activities and other sources of student absence from scheduled classes affected your teaching in the semester program as compared to teaching in the usual yearly program?

(A) A positive influence	10	3	9	7	14	7
(B) A negative influence	31	42	32	32	17	25
(C) No change	46	52	49	48	47	45
(D) No opinion	13	3	10	9	14	21

11. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what is your students' effort in school work?

(A) Greater	36	58	45	46	41	55
(B) Less	13	0	5	7	10	0
(C) The same	46	39	46	35	40	34
(D) No opinion	3	3	4	7	4	9

12. What effect has semestering upon students' learning of performance skills such as in typing, shops and home economics?

(A) Helped	26	19	30	37	29	32
(B) Hindered	5	10	8	6	6	5
(C) The same	21	19	10	10	16	11
(D) No opinion	39	52	44	33	43	45

13. What effect has semestering upon students' mastery of content material?

(A) Helped	33	23	40	47	41	32
(B) Hindered	21	23	17	12	13	11
(C) The same	33	45	30	26	34	36
(D) No opinion	10	10	12	12	9	20

14. What effect has semestering upon students' understanding of their course?

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%	%	%
(A) Helped	25	23	36	51	40	39
(B) Hindered	23	19	15	9	13	16
(C) The same	49	48	35	27	37	32
(D) No opinion	5	10	13	12	7	11

15. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how great is the opportunity for enriching the students' programs?

(A) More	33	23	32	22	33	23
(B) Less	41	58	54	57	34	63
(C) The same	23	19	12	14	23	7
(D) No opinion	3	0	1	6	4	7

16. How does the pace of your instruction in a semester system compare with that in the usual yearly program?

(A) More intensive	77	94	89	78	84	85
(B) Less intensive	5	0	1	4	3	5
(C) The same	13	7	5	12	7	4
(D) No opinion	0	0	5	4	1	2

17. What is your evaluation of your present pace of instruction as compared to that in the usual yearly program?

(A) Better	49	45	44	47	53	50
(B) Worse	18	16	15	25	11	27
(C) Of equal value	28	29	28	17	21	11
(D) No opinion	5	10	13	10	9	11

18. Has semestering caused you to modify your teaching methods?

(A) Yes	69	87	76	73	56	63
(B) No	26	13	18	20	30	23
(C) No opinion	5	0	6	6	11	13

19. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what has been the effectiveness of your teaching?

(A) More effective	41	36	28	25	31	29
(B) Less effective	15	7	9	7	7	9
(C) The same	15	13	19	16	20	16
(D) More effective in some areas, less effective in others.	26	36	35	44	31	36
(E) No opinion	2	10	9	6	7	9

20. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what effect is there upon the work and study habits of your students?

(A) Better	39	48	54	48	44	48
(B) Worse	18	42	8	6	7	7
(C) The same	33	7	32	28	31	31
(D) No opinion						

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%	%	%
21. How do you regard the meeting of a new group of students half-way through the school year?						
(A) An advantage	44	52	43	46	54	46
(B) A disadvantage	23	23	24	16	9	20
(C) Neither an advantage, nor a disadvantage	33	19	27	35	31	25
(D) No opinion	0	0	5	3	3	7
22. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how well do you know your students?						
(A) Better	10	3	24	37	31	20
(B) Not as well	51	52	40	25	21	30
(C) About the same	39	45	31	32	43	43
(D) No opinion	0	0	5	3	0	5
23. What emotional strain does semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) place upon your students?						
(A) More	26	42	56	40	46	61
(B) Less	13	16	6	19	4	5
(C) The same	41	36	24	22	27	16
(D) No opinion	21	7	13	19	17	16
24. How much emotional strain does semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) place upon you?						
(A) More	54	42	58	59	57	64
(B) Less	3	10	13	11	7	5
(C) The same	44	39	26	21	33	25
(D) No opinion	0	3	3	7	1	4
25. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what amount of individual assistance do you give to students?						
(A) More	21	7	23	30	20	11
(B) Less	18	16	24	19	20	29
(C) The same	56	71	47	43	53	55
(D) No opinion	5	7	4	7	6	4
26. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how important is regular attendance of students?						
(A) More important	77	81	94	89	87	95
(B) Less important	5	0	0	3	1	0
(C) No difference	18	19	5	5	9	2
(D) No opinion	0	0	1	3	0	2

27. What effect does semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) have upon your sponsorship of extra-curricular activities (clubs, teams, and student events)?

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%	%	%
(A) Helped	3	3	3	6	1	4
(B) Hindered	26	10	31	19	26	39
(C) No effect	62	68	53	49	54	38
(D) Not applicable	10	16	13	24	17	18

28. What effect does semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) have upon student participation in extra-curricular activities?

(A) Helped	8	0	3	7	3	5
(B) Hindered	13	10	27	17	14	30
(C) No effect	49	45	37	38	37	21
(D) No opinion	31	36	30	35	46	39

29. In the first semester during the 1970-71 school year what percentage of unassigned time did you have?

(A) 0-10%	41	16	10	9	26	20
(B) 11-15%	49	65	18	30	7	61
(C) 16-20%	5	7	51	52	59	11
(D) 21-25%	0	3	9	7	3	4
(E) more than 25%	0	10	6	3	1	4

30. In the second semester during the 1970-71 school year what percentage of unassigned time do you have?

(A) 0-10%	46	16	10	9	27	20
(B) 11-15%	49	71	14	22	14	57
(C) 16-20%	5	7	60	61	50	18
(D) 21-25%	0	3	8	4	4	2
(E) more than 25%	0	3	5	3	1	2

31. What best describes what you usually do during periods of unassigned time, (if any)?

(A) Marking	10	26	15	21	23	25
(B) Lesson planning and preparation	69	61	56	54	56	54
(C) Working with students	8	7	15	15	7	9
(D) None of these (includes time for personal relaxation)	5	3	3	5	4	4
(E) I have no unassigned time	5	3	8	3	9	9

32. What proportion of students generally can benefit from unassigned time?

(A) All students	8	27	6	6	4	5
(B) More than half of the students	10	19	23	15	20	11
(C) Fewer than half of the students	62	36	60	67	64	73
(D) None of the students	3	10	3	4	3	0
(E) No opinion	15	13	5	7	9	11

33. With regard to the present length of class periods, would you prefer:

	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
(A) Longer periods	7	13	1	3	3	4
(B) Shorter periods	21	13	14	4	9	13
(C) The same length	46	48	55	62	51	55
(D) Flexible-time periods (i.e. modules)	23	26	26	30	34	23
(E) No opinion	0	0	4	0	0	2

34. Which system do you prefer?

(A) The semester system	51	74	67	69	67	63
(B) The traditional yearly program	18	23	21	14	16	21
(C) No preference	18	3	8	7	13	7
(D) No opinion	8	0	4	3	1	4
(E) Not applicable (I have not experienced <u>both</u> systems)	3	0	1	1	1	2

35. Please record your comments on any aspect of semestering.

<u>Sample Positive Comments</u>:

Retention of knowledge is better for students in semestered courses.

Semestering allows teachers to evaluate their methods in the middle of the school year.

Semestering allows New Canadians to enter regular classes twice in the school year.

Students can repeat failed courses in the next semester.

Semestering allows a student a greater choice of courses and greater flexibility in timetabling.

<u>Sample Negative Comments</u>:

More classes are taught on a yearly basis in a semester system than in a traditional system.

Semestering has increased clerical duties for administrators, counsellors and teachers.

Classes are too large for teachers to give individual assistance which is often required in semestered courses where intensive instruction occurs.

No time is available in semester courses for creative thinking and enrichment.

Reorganization of course content and methodology are needed to meet the rapid pace of the semester system.

Some courses require two semesters instead of one semester.

Flexible time periods are needed to allow students more time for difficult courses.

Rotating timetable blocks (in some semester plans) are needed to relieve one course from being interrupted during the latter part of the school day.

Students who are absent for a few days or who transfer from non-semestered schools have considerable difficulty in learning material that was missed.

In semestering there is a disconcerting lack of continuity when seven months elapse before another sequential course is studied in the same academic area.

Semestering creates discrepancies in opportunities for students preparing for scholarship exams.

No. of Questionnaires Returned - Schools: W = 201
X = 119
Y = 65
Z = 181

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES ON SEMESTERING

Instructions: Please respond to the following questions by marking between the dotted parallel lines under the appropriate letter on the answer sheet. As the response to the questionnaire is intended to be anonymous, you need not sign your name.
Important: Please use a medium (HB) pencil to shade between the dotted parallel lines under the appropriate letters on the answer sheet.

	SCHOOL			
	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%
1. Sex:				
(A) Male	47	63	39	49
(B) Female	52	37	62	51
2. In what grade are you registered?				
(A) Grade 9	27	20	31	27
(B) Grade 10	26	26	23	24
(C) Grade 11	28	23	0	27
(D) Grade 12	18	30	46	21
3. What program are you taking at school?				
(A) Academic	63	66	94	75
(B) Non-Academic	36	33	5	24
4. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what has been your workload? (If you have not previously attended a secondary school with a yearly program, you may assess the semester system in terms of your previous experience.)				
(A) Greater	39	38	51	66
(B) Less	14	13	14	3
(C) The same	37	38	35	28
(D) No opinion	9	8	0	2
5. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what amount of effort do you put forth in class?				
(A) More effort in a semester system	44	40	48	44
(B) Less effort in a semester system	9	9	17	6
(C) The same	42	46	31	49
(D) No opinion	5	3	5	1
6. What effect has semestering on the number of hours of school work done at home?				
(A) More school work at home.	42	43	48	53
(B) Less school work at home.	21	15	20	10
(C) The same	34	35	29	34
(D) No opinion	4	6	3	2

7. What effect has semestering on the number of hours of school work done in school outside of class?

	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%
(A) More school work.	35	38	45	50
(B) Less school work.	14	17	12	7
(C) The same	40	34	37	37
(D) No opinion	9	10	6	6

8/18. What effect does semestering have upon learning? By selecting one of the following responses for each subject area, 8-18, describe what effect a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) has upon learning.

(A) Easier to learn in a semester system
(B) Harder to learn in a semester system
(C) The same
(D) No opinion
(E) Not applicable (I have not taken the subject in a semester system)

	A				B				C				D				E			
	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z	W	X	Y	Z
8. Art, Music, Drama	26	19	49	22	8	9	5	9	10	10	19	20	9	11	2	4	45	47	26	44
9. Commerce	26	16	25	18	10	10	2	9	12	8	0	7	10	9	5	4	43	52	68	61
10. English	44	35	48	31	20	25	14	26	29	31	34	40	3	3	3	1	2	2	0	1
11. Mathematics	36	39	48	35	36	25	32	30	17	15	17	20	5	3	0	1	5	15	2	13
12. Modern Languages	37	24	48	25	11	19	20	22	17	16	12	19	8	7	6	3	26	29	12	30
13. Home Economics	24	20	32	16	2	3	3	8	12	15	14	18	8	8	5	5	53	47	45	59
14. Physical Education	30	25	28	17	5	6	3	6	53	31	59	61	5	5	3	2	8	29	6	13
15. Science	37	39	43	24	23	16	32	31	23	19	20	28	4	4	0	3	12	19	3	13
16. Industrial Education	23	20	17	13	7	3	0	8	10	16	6	16	11	7	8	4	48	48	68	59
17. Social Studies	38	35	43	24	19	19	14	23	32	28	28	40	3	3	8	2	7	13	6	11
18. Guidance	19	19	14	9	5	5	3	4	50	39	59	59	19	8	15	8	6	27	8	19

19. What effect has semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) upon learning of performance skills, such as in Typing, Woodwork, Sewing, etc.?

(A) Easier to learn in a semester system	57	45	62	40
(B) Harder to learn in a semester system	10	10	2	20
(C) The same	18	24	15	26
(D) No opinion	14	19	20	13

20. What effect does a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) have upon classroom instruction?

(A) Classroom teaching is more concentrated in a semester system	75	73	80	78
(B) Classroom teaching is less concentrated in a semester system	10	8	5	9
(C) The same	10	12	15	12
(D) No opinion	6	6	0	1

	W %	X %	Y %	Z %
21. What effect does a semester system have upon the teaching methods in the classroom?				
(A) Improved	40	39	52	30
(B) Worsened	19	21	11	36
(C) The same	29	33	34	30
(D) No opinion	11	5	3	3
22. In a semester system is there sufficient time to complete the courses you are taking?				
(A) Definitely, yes	29	21	31	19
(B) Probably, yes	49	52	52	54
(C) No	16	20	14	24
(D) No opinion	6	5	3	3
23. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what is the interest level of your courses?				
(A) Courses are more interesting in a semester system	42	40	54	34
(B) Courses are less interesting in a semester system	18	20	15	27
(C) The same	35	36	29	35
(D) No opinion	5	4	2	3
24. What effect does semestering have upon your work and study habits as compared to the usual yearly program?				
(A) Better	38	40	57	44
(B) Worse	15	16	17	17
(C) The same	40	41	23	34
(D) No opinion	6	3	0	4
25. How does your success on the semester system compare with that on the usual yearly program?				
(A) More success in a semester system	42	39	52	32
(B) Less success in a semester system	16	12	19	17
(C) Approximately the same	36	46	25	49
(D) No opinion	5	2	5	2
26. Do you like meeting new groups of students in the second semester?				
(A) Yes	85	73	86	76
(B) No	6	7	5	11
(C) No opinion	8	19	6	11

27. Do you like the possibility of meeting different teachers in the second semester?

	W %	X %	Y %	Z %
(A) Yes	75	69	79	64
(B) No	14	13	6	19
(C) No opinion	10	17	12	16

28. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how well do you know your fellow students?

(A) Better	33	29	28	25
(B) Not as well	15	15	29	32
(C) The same	48	51	39	40
(D) No opinion	5	4	3	1

29. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how well do you know your teachers?

(A) Better	33	35	34	22
(B) Not as well	21	14	19	28
(C) The same	42	43	42	43
(D) No opinion	5	6	5	4

30. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what amount of individual assistance do teachers give students?

(A) More	25	16	29	11
(B) Less	27	34	22	46
(C) The same	39	40	40	37
(D) No opinion	9	8	8	5

31. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how important is regular attendance for students?

(A) More important	79	86	82	96
(B) Less important	11	0	8	1
(C) The same	9	10	9	3
(D) No opinion	2	3	2	0

32. Do you participate in extra-curricular activities (clubs, teams and student events)?

(A) Not at all	41	44	33	37
(B) One or two extra-curricular activities	46	45	43	44
(C) Three or more extra-curricular activities	12	12	26	19

33. What effect does semestering (as compared to the usual yearly program) have upon your participation in extra-curricular activities (clubs, teams, and student events)?

	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%
(A) Makes easier	14	13	5	4
(B) Makes more difficult	27	22	29	40
(C) No effect	33	26	48	32
(D) Not involved	24	33	15	23

34. Do you plan to graduate early?

(A) Yes	21	23	8	14
(B) No	56	61	72	69
(C) No opinion	22	11	19	16

35. Do you plan to enrich your program?

(A) Yes	61	55	63	52
(B) No	10	18	15	25
(C) No opinion	26	21	22	22

36. Which system do you prefer?

(A) The semester system	78	69	71	66
(B) The usual yearly program	6	13	12	22
(C) No preference	6	3	5	8
(D) No opinion	4	4	2	2
(E) Not applicable (I have not experienced <u>both</u> systems)	4	2	9	0

In the space below, please give reasons for your answer to question 36.

37. Please comment on any aspect of semestering.

Sample Comments from Questions 36 and 37

Positive Comments:

In a semester system many courses can be completed in five months.

As compared to a yearly program the information in semestered courses can be more easily retained as fewer subjects are studied.

A course which is failed during the first semester can be repeated in the second semester.

The change of subjects and classes in the middle of the school year maintains student interest in school.

The semester system permits students to graduate early or study a greater variety of courses.

Negative Comments:

Some courses have too much content to be covered in one semester.

Homework assignments must be completed rapidly in a semester plan.

APPENDIX D

No. of Questionnaires Returned - Schools: W = 46
X = 79
Y = 60
Z = 102

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE
PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRES ON SEMESTERING

Instructions: Please indicate your responses to the following questions by placing a check mark (✓) after the statements which correspond to your opinions. The response to the questionnaire is intended to be anonymous and you need not sign your name.

1. In a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) what amount of school work does your child do at home?

	W %	X %	Y %	Z %
(A) More	41	25	38	38
(B) Less	22	27	20	11
(C) About the same	37	47	40	50
(D) No opinion	0	1	2	1

2. What has been your child's success on the semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program)?

(A) Better	52	39	43	31
(B) Less	2	18	17	13
(C) About the same	43	42	35	53
(D) No opinion	3	1	5	3

3. On a semester system (as compared to the usual yearly program) how important is the regular attendance of your child?

(A) More important	74	77	77	80
(B) Less important	0	3	7	1
(C) The same importance	26	15	10	15
(D) No opinion	0	5	6	4

4. Which plan does your child prefer?

(A) The semester plan	83	76	73	65
(B) The traditional yearly plan	4	10	12	25
(C) No preference	11	11	10	10
(D) No opinion	2	3	5	0

Why? (Please comment)

Positive Sample Comments:

A greater variety of subjects is available to students in the semester program

Failed subjects can be more easily repeated in the semester system.

Students can concentrate on a few subjects at one time in a semester plan.

Negative Sample Comment:

Pace of instruction is too rapid in semestered courses.

5. Which plan do you favour?	W	X	Y	Z
	%	%	%	%
(A) The semester plan_____	72	53	62	52
(B) The traditional yearly plan_____	13	13	12	25
(C) No preference_____	7	16	13	13
(D) No opinion_____	8	18	13	10

Why? (Please comment)

Sample Positive Comment:

Concentrated study on a few subjects in each semester improves retention and creates more interest among students.

Sample Negative Comments:

The pace of learning is too rapid for the average student in the semester system.

Students forget content when there is a gap of 7 months between semestered courses in the same subject area.

6. Do you think that additional courses in the semestering system are beneficial for your child?				
(A) Yes_____	76	65	70	74
(B) No_____	11	13	13	10
(C) No opinion_____	13	22	17	16

Why? (Please comment)

Sample Positive Comments:

Additional courses broaden and enrich knowledge for students.

Additional courses create more student interest in school.

Sample Negative Comment:

More time should be spent on the basic subjects.